

i have this paranoia
of them tearing my book shelves apart
carting off box loads of manuscripts
falsifying my records

i have this thought
that, in their eyes,
a taxpayer is suspect if:
either too prosperous or
not prosperous enough. that it should be
against the law to earn less than
middle-class taxable incomes.

RATTLESNAKES AND GUITARS

this Mexican man showed me
when i was a dozen years old
the rattlesnake rattles
he kept in his guitar
for good luck. he shook the guitar
for effect as he played.

i've found it a good place
to store all my spare picks,
i just dump 'em in there
and the guitar rattles, and
when i need another, i just turn her
upsidedown and empty one out.

HOW DO YOU SAY

on the car radio
the disk jockey just made
the perennial mispronunciation of
Illinois Jacquet's name, making
it sound French with: Já-Kày.
which is how we all said it
until i met Illinois' trumpet-playing
brother Russell and he jumped
out of his skin, "It's Jacket! Jacket!"
which led me to believe
he's been trying to straighten
this problem out
all his life.

A NEW LID

Willie Nelson does this changing hat bit
where in concert
the audience throws up various type hats

and he'll wear them as fits his fancy
then throw them back.
Last night, while into the middle
of a song
somebody tossed one up
and Willie still singing gauged the toss
made it to the end of a verse stretching
his arm a bit
and then made a quick side-step,
caught the hat and jumped back to the mike
just in time to pick up the lyric
without missing a beat.
The crowd loved it
and he put it on smiling —
a big old white brimmed riverboat cardshark hat.

THE WAY IT GOES

the ancient Natufians
of 8,000 years ago
lived in the wooded hills of Israel

an agricultural
neolithic society
of about 2,000

made plaster
for their floors and walls
from mined black limestone & coal
baked long & hot with wood
till white & granulated

cooled &
mixed with water
for application.

this they did until there were
no more trees

no more wood to cook their limestone

the big bones of wild sheep & feral cattle
disappear too.

men who dig these things up
begin to find mud floors and smaller bones
of domesticated animals

these later Natufians
probably blamed it on the Gods
and left the bare rocky treeless hills
to find further development possibilities